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New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Amde
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

Mr. Lowcock: The Security Council has asked me to update it today on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. In a word, it is bleak. We are losing the fight against famine. The situation has deteriorated in an alarming way in recent weeks. We may now be approaching a tipping point, beyond which it will be impossible to prevent massive loss of life as a result of widespread famine across the country.

As the Council knows, Yemen has for some time now been the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Years of very intense and protracted fighting all over the country have destroyed infrastructure, wrecked public services, displaced millions of people from their homes and livelihoods, and have led to what is believed to be the worst cholera outbreak the world has ever seen ravage the country. All that, together with a dramatic economic collapse in a country already among the world's poorest meant that, at the beginning of this year, fully three quarters of Yemenis — 75 per cent, that is, 22 million people — were in need of some kind of humanitarian assistance or protection.

Many millions no longer have any regular source of income, including the families of teachers, health workers, water and sanitation workers and other public servants who have not been paid a regular salary in two years. Approximately 18 million people, including a high proportion of Yemen's children, are food insecure, and more than 8 million of them are severely food insecure, meaning they do not know where their next meal will come from. They need emergency food assistance to survive.

Notwithstanding all that, the humanitarian situation has been kept stable and the worst loss of life avoided so far this year. That is because the world's worst crisis has attracted the world's largest and one of the world's most effective humanitarian relief efforts. In the first half of the year, humanitarian organizations supported under the United Nations response plan provided assistance to more than 8 million of the most vulnerable Yemenis. The operation has been substantially scaled up and broadened since last year. While food distribution reached 3 million people a month last year, it has been dramatically expanded: we aim to reach 8 million people this month. A third wave of the cholera outbreak has been kept at bay with intensified prevention campaigns, repairing and chlorinating water networks and vaccinating people in high-risk districts in Aden, Al-Hudaydah and Ibb. Health facilities that would have otherwise closed have remained open through an incentive programme paid to health-care workers to keep services going.

Running such a large-scale relief effort requires an enormous operation on the ground. I want to pay tribute to all the aid workers — thousands of them from United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization and others — as well as to the Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations and countless international, and especially national, civil society organizations. Most of the aid workers are Yemenis helping other Yemenis, often at considerable personal risk.

The relief effort would also be impossible without the generous funding voluntarily provided by our donors. I want to again thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Kuwait, the United States and many European countries, which together have committed about $2.6 billion, including $2 billion through the 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, to finance the operation.

I also want to note that the aid operation would not be possible, given the intensity of the conflict, without the deconfliction system run by the coalition authorities. We notify the Evacuation and Humanitarian Operation Cell in Riyadh of the operations of the aid agencies, and that protects aid workers, to a large degree, from being caught up in the fighting and helps the coalition to meet its obligations under international humanitarian law.

But the issue I want to flag to the Council today is that two recent developments threaten to overwhelm the aid operation.

First, there is a marked economic deterioration, symptomized by the depreciation of the Yemeni rial by some 30 per cent in the last month or so. Because almost all the food consumed in Yemen is imported, that depreciation translates directly into a sharp increase in the price of food for approximately 10 million Yemenis who are food insecure but are not reached by the aid operation. We are already seeing pockets of famine-like conditions, including cases where people are eating leaves because they have no other form of sustenance. We estimate that an additional 3.5 million people may soon be added to the 8 million already severely food insecure.

Compounding that, the depreciation of the rial and access problems are producing unprecedented increases in the price of fuel. My team on the ground reported yesterday that people are waiting in kilometre-long queues at petrol stations. As petrol prices have doubled just this week, transportation costs have gone up and reaching a health facility or fleeing fighting when it reaches one's neighbourhood is becoming unaffordable for many families without outside help.

Commercial imports of food and fuel have yet to recover from last November's blockade. Fuel imports in September are only one third of what they were in August. Commercial food imports dropped from a registered 410,000 metric tons in May to 280,000 metric tons in August. That is a decrease of 30 per cent. With the confidence of shipping companies already very battered, as reflected in a 35 per cent drop in clearance requests since the blockade, any further shocks could add to the core humanitarian caseload in a way that would simply overwhelm the capacity of humanitarian organizations.

Secondly, the intensification of fighting in recent weeks around Al-Hudaydah is choking the lifeline that the aid operation and commercial markets rely on. The combination of the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, where most of Yemen's food imports arrive, the access roads from the ports to the large population centres in the north and the west of the country and the facilities in the city in which imported grain is milled before onwards transportation is the essential, irreplaceable infrastructure on which aid operations and commercial imports rely.

The main Al-Hudaydah-Sana'a road, which is the principal artery used by commercial importers and humanitarian organizations to move commodities from the ports to people across the country, has been cut off in recent days due to fighting. Other routes are heavily damaged and transport times have increased, and therefore the cost has risen for humanitarian organizations and private companies.

The Red Sea Mills in Al-Hudaydah, which currently holds 45,000 tons of grain imported by the World Food Programme — enough to feed 3.5 million people for a month — has recently been inaccessible because of fighting in the local area. Armed groups have occupied humanitarian facilities. Attacks against civilians and humanitarian sites have resulted in dozens of deaths, especially of children, and serious damage has been caused to public health and water facilities and other humanitarian assets.

Aid agencies, including the United Nations, still have 600 staff in Al-Hudaydah. While we have, since June, provided direct assistance to over half a million people fleeing the fighting in the governorate, aid activities, including life-saving immunization campaigns, have been delayed or prevented.

It is far from clear that the recent intensification of fighting is producing any winners. It is, though, all too abundantly clear who the losers are — millions of Yemeni civilians, most of them women and children, whose lives are now right on the line. I know that some people will want to talk about who is to blame for the position we now face. That is, with respect, the wrong question for today. The issue for today is who can do something to head off the impending catastrophe. While we will continue to push to scale up the humanitarian response, humanitarian organizations simply cannot look after the needs of all 29 million Yemenis. That is untenable. We ask the Security Council for support in three key areas to prevent a complete collapse and to safeguard the lives of millions of the most vulnerable people.

First, immediate measures are needed to stabilize the economy and support the exchange rate. That includes usable liquidity for the Central Bank and the implementation of long-standing commitments to pay key public-sector salaries across the whole country, so that more people have the wherewithal to buy food and keep alive the commercial markets, which, as I have said, aid agencies cannot replace. It is, at the

same time, essential to avoid any policy measures that would damage the already paper-thin confidence of commercial importers any further.

Secondly, everyone with a stake in this must uphold their obligations to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and facilitate access to vulnerable people. We have to keep all ports and main roads open, functional and safe. No humanitarian site should be used for military purposes. As I have said to members of the Council, the lifeline through which the aid operation runs now hangs by a thread.

Thirdly, we ask all parties to find practical solutions to key issues, including the opening of an air bridge for civilians to seek medical treatment outside Yemen for diseases that are no longer treatable inside the country. That would pave the way for the opening of the airport in Sana'a.

Finally, the parties need to come to the negotiating table and engage seriously with the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on a positive path towards peace.

The President: I thank Mr. Lowcock for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you, Madam President, for scheduling this important briefing today. I thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock. To pick up on one of his points, I also want to thank him for everything that his workers are doing on the ground, as well as all the other relevant United Nations agencies. I was very struck by what he said with regard to the large-scale nature of the relief effort, as well as by the fact that Yemenis are helping Yemenis. I believe that is important.

It was a very sobering briefing, following the others that we have heard before. I was struck by his phrases concerning lives on the line, how close we are to famine and that we might even be losing the fight. That is obviously extremely serious news. It is grave distress inflicted upon the people of Yemen. We are following the escalation of military fighting around Al-Hudaydah very closely. I wanted to pick up on Mr. Lowcock's statement and highlight just four areas.

First, to reiterate once again — I think that everyone on the Security Council has done this, but it bears repeating — all parties to the conflict must do everything possible to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and demonstrate in practical terms their commitment to upholding international humanitarian law. I was extremely concerned to hear about armed groups' presence in humanitarian facilities. I believe that the Council should demand that they leave. Those facilities need to be maintained for the protection of civilians. All parties have responsibilities under international humanitarian law, and the Council looks to them to discharge those responsibilities fully.

The second point concerns the flow of food, fuel and medical supplies into and throughout Yemen. It is critical that all parties facilitate that and that they work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Mr. Lowcock's partners on the ground. It is also important that civilians can move freely and safely so that those who can travel can get out of harm's way as necessary. We have been deeply concerned about reports that military action is making the Al-Hudaydah-Al-Hajjarah road unsafe. That will hamper the flow of supplies from Al-Hudaydah to northern Yemen. It is vital that onward supply routes remain operational. I should like to echo what Mr. Lowcock said: that cannot be done through humanitarian assistance alone. We absolutely need the commercial routes and supplies to be open and flowing. That therefore means that the Al-Hudaydah and Saleef ports need to remain open and that the mills and the food storage facilities need to be protected so that the food supply is safe.

I also wanted to join the Under-Secretary-General in his remarks about urgent action on stabilizing the economy. Since as recently as late July, the Yemeni rial has depreciated more than 20 per cent. That has halved the buying power of the people for food and other staples in comparison with one year ago. That is obviously increasing the vulnerability of families even to meet basic needs. Humanitarian Aid, as we heard, is overstretched, and even that is not enough because there are 29 million Yemenis liable to need our help. We therefore need to collectively think further about how best the Council can help stabilize the humanitarian situation by helping stabilize the economic situation, or by dealing with the relevant United Nations and other agencies and countries that can help in order to do that. I would like to call on all sides to cooperate even more intensely with OCHA and the United Nations agencies on the ground to try and help steady the situation.

I should like to conclude on the same point on which Mr. Lowcock ended by just reiterating the vital and overriding importance of the political situation. I will not recall the reasons for which the Geneva talks did not take the steps that we wanted them to take. I do not want to go into detail because I do not want to complicate the work of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, who is now trying to reconvene political talks. I am sure that our ministers who will be here next week for the General Assembly will want to have many discussions about Yemen on the margins of the high-level week. I believe that that will be important. Lastly, I call on all sides once again to get behind the process that the Special Envoy is leading and urge them all to find the flexibility that it will require for the sake of the Yemeni people.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we thank Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his briefing to the Security Council on the latest developments concerning the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

I will focus on two points in my statement: first, the developments of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and, secondly, the political and security developments.

With regard to the developments of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, we just heard Mr. Lowcock's briefing in which he provided troubling numbers and statistics that demonstrate the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen, especially in Al-Hudaydah. That situation unfortunately reached unprecedented levels of daily suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people, which has been exacerbated by the activities of the Houthi groups who exploit routes used for the delivery of humanitarian aid. Those groups set up intensive military checkpoints clearly intended hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need of it — people who are suffering cruelly from the possibility of famine and ongoing epidemics.

In order to ensure humanitarian access, the Yemeni Government forces, backed up by the alliance to restore legitimacy, conducted targeted operations that temporarily closed the main road between Sana'a and Al-Hudaydah; communicated through the Al-Riyadh Evacuation and Humanitarian Operations Committee with the active international humanitarian organizations in order to inform them about alternative routes available for the delivery of humanitarian assistance from Al-Hudaydah to Sana'a; and confirmed that the road would be reopened as soon as possible after ensuring that it is de-mined and that checkpoints are lifted, which have hindered the delivery of humanitarian assistance and undermined international efforts aimed at easing humanitarian suffering. The latest of such efforts include the donor conference held in April in Geneva on the situation in Yemen.

Concerning political and security developments, today's meeting is taking place to discuss the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which is the outcome of the stalemate in political efforts to end the crisis, owing to the Houthis' absence during the 6 September round of consultations, which were fully supported by the Security Council.

The pro-legitimacy coalition has stepped in at various stages of the crisis to support and facilitate a political solution in Yemen based on resolutions of the international legitimacy. The latest of the coalition's actions include ceasing military operations in Al-Hudaydah, supporting United Nations efforts led by Mr. Martin Griffiths, and providing sufficient time to resume the dialogue among Yemeni parties, despite security challenges posed by the Houthis, as they continue their practices that constitute a threat to regional peace and security, through controlling Al-Hudaydah port and threatening the safety of international maritime navigation.

Those threats were confirmed by the letter addressed on 17 September to the President of the Security Council from the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), regarding sanctions on Yemen. The letter underscored the conclusions of the Committee's Panel of Experts, reaffirming the direct responsibility of the Houthis for the attack on the oil tanker *Abqaiq* and another commercial ship transporting wheat, while noting that if the attack on the oil tanker had been successful, it would have caused an environmental disaster with wide negative impact on the transport of merchandise from and into Yemen. That letter also reaffirmed that those attacks are a violation of international humanitarian law and would have a negative impact on the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Given this unprecedentedly terrible humanitarian situation, the Security Council must send a message to the Yemeni parties, and especially the Houthis, that emphasizes the following points.

First, attempts to consolidate gains and strengthen personal interests rather than those of the Yemeni people

by ignoring Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), and by continuing to refuse to participate positively in the political process, are unacceptable. Secondly, ballistic-missile attacks on neighbouring States and threats to maritime commercial routes in Bab Al-Mandab and the Red Sea are also unacceptable. Thirdly, it is equally unacceptable to use civilians as human shields, utilize civilian facilities and maritime ports as bases for launching military attacks or recruit children for military purposes, all of which are considered war crimes punishable under international law. Fourthly, it is vital to cooperate with the United Nations to ensure the safe delivery and full distribution of humanitarian assistance in every region of Yemen and without targeting United Nations field personnel.

In conclusion, we reiterate our support for Mr. Griffiths, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and the importance of stepping up efforts to end the crisis in Yemen based on a political solution that complies with the three political terms of reference — the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions — in order to ensure Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for having taken this initiative and the United States delegation for convening today's important meeting so promptly. We are grateful to Mr. Lowcock for his briefing on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which we found extremely alarming.

We have a long history of friendship with the people of Yemen, and we deeply and sincerely sympathize with them. While we note the courageous efforts of the humanitarian workers there, we realize that the only possible solutions to the problem are political ones. Like our other colleagues on the Council, we are worried about the escalation of violence in Yemen and have expressed our position on the issue many times. De-escalating the situation around Al-Hudaydah and halting offensive operations should help Special Envoy Griffiths succeed in his efforts. We call for restraint and for refraining from relying on force. We do not believe that one of the parties can extract greater flexibility from the other through violent pressure. The history of the conflict in Yemen shows that that approach does not work.

Mr. Lowcock quite rightly said just now that the only losers in this conflict will be the people of Yemen, who have endured unprecedented suffering and terrible experiences, including a cholera epidemic — in the twenty-first century. We must now all band together to support the efforts of Special Envoy Griffiths, whom we see as an objective and impartial mediator who has held fruitful talks with the Yemeni Government's delegation in Geneva. Productive contact was also made recently with representatives of Ansar Allah in Sana'a and Muscat. We are certain that a way can still be found to reach agreements, particularly on establishing confidence-building measures. There is a real chance of making progress on issues regarding the exchange of prisoners, opening the Sana'a airport, establishing international control at the port of Al-Hudaydah and paying Government workers' salaries throughout Yemen.

We call on all the parties to the conflict in Yemen to actively join Mr. Griffith's mediation efforts. Unilateral acts such as the missile strikes on Saudi Arabian territory, which we condemn, cannot produce effective, long-term results and can ultimately only widen the gulf of misunderstanding and mistrust between the opposing sides and undermine the prospects for restoring peace. For our part, we will continue to support the Special Envoy's efforts through our contacts with all the parties to the conflict in Yemen, and we urge our colleagues to give him active assistance. We support a halt to the violence throughout Yemen, which will enable the country to focus on the political process and on the urgent task of rebuilding its ruined infrastructure immediately. Its economy lies in ruins, and any delay threatens to make the country's already dire situation unredeemable. Russia will continue its humanitarian assistance to the people of Yemen in both the north and south.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that finding solutions to the conflict in Yemen would contribute significantly to stabilizing the situation throughout the subregion. We want to remind the Council of our proposal for launching a process for drafting a package of security- and confidence-building measures in the Persian Gulf, and ultimately throughout the Middle East. Establishing this kind of architecture, which all the key countries in the region, including the Gulf States and Iran, should participate in, would not only help to strengthen comprehensive and indivisible security in that part of the world but also to resolve both

long-standing and new crises, including the Yemeni conflict. Threats and confrontation must give way to dialogue and cooperation, and cooperation on that basis can enable us to settle the conflict quickly.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his very informative, though alarming, briefing. I would also like to pay tribute to the humanitarian workers engaged in Yemen and to thank them for their devotion and commitment.

The Council's last meeting on the situation in Yemen (S/PV.8348) inspired cautious optimism. We discussed the resumption of consultations with the parties to the conflict and the prospects of bringing them to the negotiating table, and we were united in our message that the way forward is by finding a political solution to this conflict. While we still firmly believe this to be true, today, only 10 days later, we are meeting here again, and yet again we have to acknowledge the deteriorating situation on the ground in Yemen and confront the grim reality of its severe humanitarian crisis.

We are saddened to see the recent escalation of violence in Al-Hudaydah governorate and the armed clashes moving closer to Al-Hudaydah city every day. The number of civilian casualties has risen significantly since the beginning of September. As military action continues to intensify around the port and city of Al-Hudaydah, the deterioration of the humanitarian crisis is not simply imminent — it is already happening, and it is not going to stop unless the conflicting parties immediately renounce violence and commit to a cessation of hostilities. We must not forget that Al-Hudaydah is a crucial lifeline for millions and the main gateway for food and other supplies entering the country. What happens in and around it therefore has a major impact on the humanitarian situation in every other governorate of Yemen. We call on all stakeholders to work to ensure that all roads are accessible and all ports, including Al-Hudaydah, Ras Isa and Saleef, remain open and fully functional, so that humanitarian aid can be delivered to the millions of people who need it so desperately.

Unfortunately, we constantly face alarming reports of the targeting of civilian infrastructure in Yemen. Therefore, we strongly call on all the parties involved in the conflict to respect the most basic principles of international humanitarian law, such as those of distinction and proportionality, and to ensure the protection of civilians.

Let me reaffirm our strong support for the efforts of the Special Envoy aimed at relaunching an inclusive peace process. We firmly believe that there can be only a political solution to the conflict in Yemen. We call on the parties to the conflict to cease violence and refrain from taking actions that may lead to further suffering of civilians and that may push the whole country into a humanitarian disaster.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting, and Mr. Mark Lowcock for his enlightening, albeit dark, briefing.

Peru regrets and notes with deep concern the continuing conflict in Yemen, which has resulted in the worst humanitarian crisis in the world and serious violations of international law and international humanitarian law. More than 11 million children are in extremely vulnerable situations. In accordance with the presidential statement on the protection of civilians (S/PRST/2018/18) that we just adopted, we express our rejection of the current escalation of violence in and around Al-Hudaydah, and we must continue to point out its grave consequences in terms of deaths, wounded, displaced persons, extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

We lament that the timely warnings issued by the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies about the risks of escalation in Al-Hudaydah have not led to effective preventive diplomacy, notwithstanding the significant efforts made by Special Envoy Martin Griffith with the Security Council's support. It is clear that his task is very complex and that we must continue to support him.

We regret the absence of the Houthis and the difficulties in making progress in Geneva. Nonetheless, under no circumstances can that be interpreted as justification for insisting on a non-existent military solution to the conflict. On the contrary, we must step up efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table.

In that connection, we note that the promises of a supposedly limited impact of an escalation of hostilities in Al-Hudaydah are not credible. We must remember that a defining feature of the conflict has been the committing of atrocious crimes with impunity by all

parties and with a clear disdain for their consequences on the civilian population.

There are 22 million Yemenis living under precarious conditions. The economic paralysis generated by the conflict has hit them hard. Basic services have become inaccessible. As has been pointed out, civil servants, including teachers and medical personnel, are no longer being paid. Hyperinflation and devaluation are affecting the poorest.

In that context, Peru considers it indispensable and urgent that all the parties involved in the conflict, and especially those with the capacity to influence them, including the Council, take action to achieve a lasting ceasefire and bring the conflict back to the negotiating table.

We stress the real possibilities of achieving an inclusive political solution, which the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General has been promoting, and we stress the need to move forward in the process with confidence-building measures among the parties.

For now, we stress the need to ensure the safety, openness and full functioning of the ports, especially that of Al-Hudaydah, as well as the city's highways and other access routes to the city, to provide essential goods.

We would also like to express our admiration and support for the humanitarian workers deployed in the country, who are carrying out their work under very risky conditions, and we underscore the need to ensure their safe and unrestricted access to the population.

Lastly, we cannot accept double standards. It is imperative that the Council remain united and be consistent with regard to its responsibility to protect civilians in all humanitarian crises, wherever they occur, in line with international law and international humanitarian law.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank Mr. Mark Lowcock for his sobering update today. He and all humanitarians working tirelessly to alleviate suffering and save lives have our full and wholehearted support. He should be congratulated on an ambitious and effective relief effort under what we understand to be overwhelming circumstances.

The briefing today demonstrates the desperate urgency of the humanitarian situation. The people of Yemen are already suffering from the world's largest humanitarian disaster, and with the recent deteriorating security environment, the situation is getting worse by the day. Civilian causalities are increasing, medical facilities are no longer functioning, disease is spreading, hunger is growing and the humanitarian space to reach those in need is again shrinking.

The recent fighting on the main road between Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a is now an urgent concern. The disruption of that critical supply chain would have disastrous humanitarian consequences. Hundreds of thousands of people are at risk in Al-Hudaydah and millions more in other governorates, if Al-Hudaydah is cut off from the northern parts of the country. An additional 1 million children in Yemen are now at risk of descending into famine, bringing the total number of children at risk to 5.2 million, as we have heard.

In the face of such a dramatic humanitarian situation, the demands from the Security Council, as agreed in the presidential statement adopted in March (S/PRST/2018/5), needs to be repeated loud and clear. First, steps need to be taken towards an urgent cessation of hostilities in order to promote the political process and, above all, protect the civilian population. Secondly, safe and unhindered humanitarian access needs to be ensured, including the full functioning of key ports and roads. Humanitarian personnel must be allowed to carry out their mission to save lives across the whole country — unhindered and without risking their own safety. Thirdly, respect for international humanitarian law needs to be safeguarded, including the protection of civilians, and medical and humanitarian personnel. The three asks by Mr. Lowcock today — stabilize the economy, protect civilians and ensure medical assistance and evacuation — make perfect sense and should be heeded.

After years of bloody conflict, it is evident that there is no military solution to the crisis in Yemen. Intensified diplomatic efforts are instead urgently needed to find a peaceful solution. We commend the Government of Yemen for its constructive approach in those recent efforts, and we find it deeply regrettable that the Houthis did now show up in Geneva and have continued their military activities. But the temporary setback in Geneva cannot be an excuse for a return to violence. The recent escalation not only aggravates the humanitarian situation, it also undermines the prospects for a political process. All sides will lose.

We have again today been put on notice. It is unbearably frustrating that this year, 2018, we are hearing

about massive famine and cholera outbreaks — fully preventable things. We simply cannot sit idly by as the lives of millions of innocent civilians are at risk. The Security Council must remain actively engaged and step up its efforts in support of Special Envoy Martin Griffith and Mr. Lowcock. We must call in unison on all parties — and repeat that call and remind them — to engage in good faith in an inclusive United Nations-led political process without preconditions, but with dedication, energy and serious commitment. The high-level week, as the United Kingdom Ambassador said, coming up now should be used as an opportunity in that regard. The people of Yemen have already paid an unacceptably high price for this senseless war.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the United Kingdom for taking the initiative to convene this crucial meeting, which is being held at a time when the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate under the circumstances that Mr. Lowcock just eloquently described in detail.

I will address three points. First, I will refer to the escalation of tensions in the governorate of Al-Hudaydah since the beginning of September, specifically in recent days, and the major humanitarian risks it poses. I will then recall the need to do everything possible to guarantee humanitarian access to Yemen and to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. Finally, I will come back to the imperative of a political solution, which must be sought immediately. It alone will bring about a lasting resolution of the crisis.

First, we have reiterated many times that every effort must be made to ensure that the ongoing military confrontation in the Al-Hudaydah region spares the civilian population, which has already been sorely tested and includes many displaced persons. The civilian infrastructure must also be protected and food and power supplies ensured. While the rising tensions could lead to new population displacements, civilians seeking to flee the fighting must be able to move freely and safely.

Furthermore, as Mr. Lowcock recalled, it is necessary to protect the umbilical cord that the port of Al-Hudaydah represents for Yemen. More than three quarters of the humanitarian aid and commercial freight entering the country transits through the port of Al-Hudaydah, which, like that of Saleef, should remain open and fully operational. It is a matter not only of supplying Al-Hudaydah and the region but also of meeting the needs of a hinterland that covers most of the country, including Sana'a, where the vast majority of Yemenis live. The roads between Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a must be kept open to allow for the delivery of food aid and to prevent the large-scale malnutrition already affecting Yemen from becoming an unprecedented famine. Today, owing to the fighting, some of the reserves stored in Al-Hudaydah are already completely inaccessible. It must be clearly said: the conduct of military operations must in no way hinder humanitarian access.

Finally — and this is my third point — the humanitarian personnel who today risk their lives working in extremely dangerous conditions must be protected. It is crucial that the humanitarian actors, upon whom the Yemeni population relies very heavily, can plan their operations in advance and with the guarantee of being protected from attacks.

Besides the situation in Al-Hudaydah, we must respond collectively to the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen. Members have without doubt seen the disturbing pictures of emaciated children that have circulated on social networks and that depict a troubling reality. Civilians are the first victims of war and the consequent shortages. It is therefore important to do everything possible to ensure their protection. France reiterates its call to ensure full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need.

In addition, the humanitarian response of the United Nations must make it possible to contain the widespread cholera epidemic raging in the country. The vaccination campaigns successfully launched in recent months must be allowed to continue. The humanitarian response must also make it possible to provide Yemeni children with a future, while malnutrition makes them very vulnerable. It is unacceptable that they starve. Moreover, we reiterate that, in all situations of war, everything must be done to protect children from conflict, as required by Security Council resolutions.

While the rial has fallen sharply, prices rise and food staples are scarce, the Security Council, and more broadly the entire international community, must support the efforts of the international financial institutions to find a solution to the economic crisis facing the country. France stands ready to act in that regard, building on the work of the humanitarian meeting on Yemen held in Paris on 27 June.

The collapse of the economy and the State structures has in fact caused more deaths than the hostilities themselves. Rebuilding the State structure in a war economy is a tragic impasse that must be overcome. That requires renewed efforts by all, as Mr. Lowcock told us. I state emphatically: the protection of civilians, free and unhindered access to humanitarian aid and the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel are not options; they are obligations under international law for all the parties to the conflict.

In that context, it is absolutely essential to safeguard every opportunity to renew dialogue and to build a genuine political process based on confidence-building measures between the parties. The meeting in Geneva on 6 September may have been a missed opportunity. However, that does not in any way mean the end of efforts to advance the political process and should not lead to increased tensions between the parties.

Let us remember that the military approach cannot bring about a solution in Yemen. The war has gone on for too long. We therefore call on all the parties to continue to engage with the Special Envoy so as to resume the path of dialogue as soon as possible and to advance the political process, which is the only viable way to put an end to the conflict in Yemen. United Nations mediation alone can relaunch negotiations with a view to an agreement on the management of the port of Al-Hudaydah, a resumption of talks, a lasting cessation of hostilities and the definition of the parameters of a political solution for a durable, comprehensive and inclusive agreement that restores peace in Yemen and security in the Arabian peninsula and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait.

Given the terrible humanitarian situation, which has continued to deteriorate, France will remain fully mobilized, particularly within the Council, to work for concrete solutions that facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the political resolution of the conflict. That is the only way to end the suffering of the Yemeni population.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for having requested the convening of this meeting. We would also like to thank you, Madam President, for having granted that request. We would also like to extend our thanks to Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his detailed and informative briefing.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is deeply troubled by the ongoing hostilities in Yemen and the harm that they have caused to the population and to the country's infrastructure since the war began at the end of the first quarter of 2015. It is unfortunate that, to date, the city of Al-Hudaydah and its surroundings, through which almost 70 per cent of the imports of food, fuel and other essential supplies for the whole country enter, continue to be the scene of fighting. To ease the humanitarian crisis in the country, it is a priority to achieve the security of that town so as to ensure the full operation of its strategic port.

The vulnerability of the population continues to be grounds for great concern, with 22.2 million people needing some kind of humanitarian assistance or protection. An estimated 17.8 million people lack food security, 16 million lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation and another 16.4 million lack access to adequate health care according to a report prepared by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Added to that is the worrisome general economic situation facing the country, as described by Mr. Lowcock.

The human cost and the humanitarian impact of the conflict are unjustifiable. My delegation condemns the indiscriminate attacks that have recently taken place in public areas, where the United Nations country team documented and confirmed the deaths of 21 minors — 13 boys and 8 girls — and the mutilation of 82 minors — 51 boys and 31 girls — as well as four attacks on schools and an attack on a hospital.

Since 12 September, armed clashes on the main road between Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a have impeded the delivery of 45,000 metric tons of grain that the Red Sea Mills could process to feed more than 3 million people for a month. We appeal to the parties for an immediate cessation of hostilities in order to facilitate the delivery of that humanitarian assistance to the population.

Cholera is another problem that afflicts the Yemeni population. We regret the announcement on Monday of the death of nine people, including seven children. We are concerned about the condition of the thousands of cases recorded in the country, bearing in mind that more than 2,000 people have died of the disease since April of last year. However, we commend the efforts of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All programme and other resources to control the outbreak.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea encourages all the parties to the conflict to support the efforts of Mr. Martin Griffiths, who, since the meeting in Geneva on 6 September, when he had an opportunity to talk with the Government delegation, continues to set up more separate meetings with the other groups in order to find confidence-building measures to ensure future negotiations between the warring parties, at which we hope all the parties will be present without preconditions.

Finally, we acknowledge and support the efforts made by the United Nations, and by the Council in particular, to encourage the Yemeni parties to the conflict to work together to end it. In that regard, I call upon the international community, countries with influence on the area and the Council to continue to support the Yemeni people, who deserve a life of dignity, to emerge from a war that has plunged the country into a grave humanitarian crisis.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation joins in the gratitude expressed by several of our colleagues to the delegation of the United Kingdom for requesting today's meeting. We also thank you, Madam President, for putting this item on the agenda. And we thank Mr. Mark Lowcock for his briefing. We listened attentively to the details of the horrific effects of the war.

My delegation is deeply concern about the increasing level of violence in Yemen, and in particular about the stepped up bombing and air strikes resulting from the military campaigns in the area surrounding the city of Al-Hudaydah. Regrettably, such armed clashes have extended beyond the port and have affected the main road connecting the cities of Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a, making it practically impossible to use that route to transport goods and humanitarian assistance. In addition, as Mr. Lowcock explained, they have affected the Red Sea Mills silos.

Since the start of the conflict, the number of civilian victims who have died or have been seriously injured as a result of the clashes and attacks on civilian areas and infrastructure has risen to more than 16,000. That number could spike dangerously if the city of Al-Hudaydah and its more than 600,000 residents are trapped in the midst of a military campaign. Similarly, effects could then be felt throughout the country as ports that are vital to the survival of the Yemeni people are compromised or rendered useless by the military strife under way. We recall that more than 70 per cent of the imports that arrive in Yemen enter through the port of Al-Hudaydah. Therefore, an attack on the city or port would not only seriously affect the 22 million people who currently need humanitarian assistance in the country; the number of people who require urgent assistance would become unsustainable. It is also important to bear in mind that increased violence would also lead to the displacement of entire families fleeing the conflict and heading to the city of Al-Hudaydah for shelter. A clear example of that situation was recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. On 14 September, it reported that approximately 3,500 people had been displaced as a result of clashes in districts adjacent to Al-Hudaydah. Clearly, a military campaign in that city could cause a major disaster.

Those acts of war serve only to undermine and go against the efforts being carried out by the United Nations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to resume dialogue to bring the parties together in the quest for a negotiated solution to the conflict. Therefore, the Council must emphatically reiterate to the parties that compliance with its resolutions if obligarory, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). All actors and parties involved must therefore put an immediate end to the violence, abandon any precondition to establish dialogue and commit to starting a negotiation process for a political solution that meets the demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people, while respecting the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. My delegation supports the process of consultations and dialogue launched by the Special Envoy, as an important initiative to foster a political negotiation process that would allow for a peaceful settlement to the situation in Yemen. We again call on the actors and parties involved to join and contribute constructively to the dialogue process.

It is also essential to remind the parties that attacks or military campaigns that target civilians, public spaces, housing or medical and educational facilities, as well as missile launches and the deployment of anti-personnel mines, are contrary to international law and international humanitarian law. Such actions could constitute war crimes and be investigated and punished by the relevant international courts.

Finally, with a view to achieving a political solution to the conflict in Yemen, my delegation reiterates its full support for the efforts at mediation and dialogue

initiated and being carried out by the Special Envoy vis-à-vis the parties.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): First, let me thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his sobering briefing today. I would also like to thank the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the entire international community for their ongoing efforts in Yemen to save lives on a daily basis, under increasingly difficult circumstances. We supported the urgent request for today's briefing because we have seen the situation in Yemen deteriorate rapidly this week. We appreciate the fact that you, Madam President, were able to accommodate the request for today's briefing at such short notice.

The images coming out of Yemen of starving children on hospital beds put the international community to shame. They compel us to speak out and take action. With the fighting again flaring up around Al-Hudaydah, an additional 1 million already severely food-insecure children in Yemen risk falling victim to famine. Behind those shocking numbers lies the harsh reality of the daily lives of innocent Yemenis in a man-made crisis waged at their expense. I will address three issues here today: first, the increase of access constraints around Al-Hudaydah; secondly, the effects of the economy on the humanitarian situation and, thirdly, the protection of civilians.

First, we are extremely concerned about the consequences of this week's clashes around Al-Hudaydah on the already strained humanitarian access to the millions of Yemenis in need. The main road to Sana'a can no longer be used. I am concerned to hear from Mr. Lowcock that alternative routes are heavily damaged. Access to the Red Sea Mills warehouse has been cut off and the port is under threat now more than ever before. The shutdown of Al-Hudaydah port operations or the disruption of its supply chain to the heavily populated areas behind it would be the tipping point for a full-blown famine. The Council recognized the need to break the vicious circle of armed conflict and food insecurity when it unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018), on the 24 May. Now we must take that text to heart and ensure that we prevent any further deterioration. I would like to thank Mr. Lowcock for putting three concrete asks on the table to address the situation. In that context, we also call on OCHA to keep the Council informed about the food security situation. The warring parties and their supporters have a responsibility to keep the port open and fully functional and to ensure that the desperately needed supplies reach Yemenis in need all throughout the country.

My second point concerns another major driver of the increasing food crisis: Yemen's failing economy. The recent devaluation of the Yemeni riyal to its lowest point in history has severely hit the purchasing power of the Yemeni population. That, together with rising food prices and the non-payment of public-sector salaries for more than two years, is proving to be a lethal combination for ordinary Yemenis, including in parts of the country that have been less affected by the fighting. Experts warn that economic collapse has the potential to kill even more Yemenis than the violence underlying it. The parties need to come together and address the issue with the utmost urgency.

Thirdly, we just adopted a presidential statement on the protection of civilians (S/PRST/2018/18) The words in that statement will be meaningless if we do not insist on their full implementation in the crises on the Council's agenda. All parties need to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and address its violations. Ending impunity should be a key ingredient in the solution to the conflict in Yemen. The political transition in Yemen in early 2012 was a positive example in the region in many ways, but if it has taught us anything it is that postponing justice only fosters further conflict and feeds the notion that transgressions do not have consequences.

In conclusion, the drivers of famine in Yemen are manifold. The immediate steps to be taken are clear. The parties need to respect international humanitarian law, keep the ports open, protect the supply roads and agree once and for all on the modalities for resuming salary payments. The one thing that can permanently end the suffering of the Yemeni population is a sustainable, peaceful political solution to the conflict. We call again on all parties to demonstrate their commitment to peace, to de-escalate — first and foremost around Al-Hudaydah — and to engage without preconditions with the Special Envoy. The children of Yemen deserve protection from violence, hunger and disease. They deserve a future.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I join others in thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mark Lowcock, for his clear and comprehensive update. We convey our readiness to extend our support to his activities. We also express our deep appreciation

to him and the staff of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for working tirelessly in one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Kazakhstan is closely following recent developments and would like to make the following observations.

First, we voice our support for the repeated calls of the United Nations on all parties to save civilian lives, prevent deaths and injuries and allow for freedom of movement. We therefore note and welcome the coordinated efforts of the stakeholder arrangement — namely, the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and Gulf countries — to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Yemen.

Kazakhstan salutes the selfless work of the humanitarian partners who have been providing food, water, emergency kits, cash and health care. We regret that two-thirds of the Yemeni population still require protection from malnutrition, cholera and other diseases, which have killed or afflicted thousands of civilians, especially after the very hot summer season. My delegation expresses hope that critical health infrastructure and water stations will be thoroughly protected to serve the local populations.

Secondly, we fully agree with Mr. Lowcock's call to boost commercial imports of food, fuel and humanitarian supplies through all of Yemen's ports. We also appeal for the mobilization of emergency services and adequate funding to relieve the population from famine. At the same time, it is critical to seek new and support all existing confidence-building measures in the humanitarian sphere.

Finally, Kazakhstan welcomes the decision of the coalition to keep open all Yemeni ports, including Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, to allow humanitarian and commercial cargo to enter without restriction. Maintaining the flow of imports is essential for humanitarian cases, especially in the light of the rise in unemployment, the non-payment of salaries to public sector employees for over two years and the devaluation of the Yemeni rial, as well as rocketing food and fuel prices.

We emphasize that all obligations under international humanitarian law must be respected by all parties, who must also take responsibility to mitigate the humanitarian situation by cooperating fully with the United Nations and the relevant humanitarian agencies.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire thanks the American presidency of the Council for organizing this briefing on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and the United Kingdom for taking the initiative to request this meeting.

We thank Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for his briefing on the latest developments in the situation in Yemen.

My delegation is concerned by the resumption of fighting since 18 September around Al-Hudaydah port following the failure of the peace talks in Geneva on 8 September. These clashes are likely to aggravate the humanitarian crisis, which is already considered by the United Nations as the worst in the world. All the more worrying is the fact that this takes place in an urban area with more than 600,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, the Al-Hudaydah port, which handles 70 per cent of the country's imports, is the main gateway for approximately 90 per cent of the humanitarian aid on which millions of Yemenis depend. As a result, the renewed fighting around that strategic port not only puts the delivery of humanitarian aid at risk, but has also led to soaring prices for basic necessities. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, food prices have risen by 68 per cent since 2015. Furthermore, there are also fuel shortages.

Concerned by the serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation, Côte d'Ivoire calls on the warring parties to adhere to an immediate ceasefire to allow safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to populations in distress. We invite them to resume dialogue with a view to a political settlement of the current crisis and to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire urges the parties to the conflict to take ownership of the peace plan proposed by Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Yemen, and encourages him to continue his mediation and good offices for the resumption of intra-Yemeni dialogue.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Mark Lowcock for his briefing. I commend him and his team for their efforts to ease the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

The conflict in Yemen, which has been going on for more than three years, has plunged the country

into an acute crisis. Today, as the conflict escalates in Al-Hudaydah and other places, disruption to humanitarian access is looming large, aggravating the risk of famine and cholera outbreaks, which is a dire consequence that no one — neither the Yemeni people, the countries of the region nor the international community — can endure. It is therefore incumbent on the international community to empower the parties in Yemen to set aside their differences in the spirit of reconciliation so as to avoid the spread of conflict. This must be done as a matter of urgency in order to prevent further aggravation of the humanitarian crisis in the country.

The international community should scale up humanitarian assistance and provide medicine, food and other supplies in accordance with needs on the ground in order to mitigate the suffering of the Yemeni people. We should urge the parties concerned in Yemen to take measures to tame price hikes and keep commercial goods moving. That would also go some way towards easing the crisis. The parties concerned should work together to improve humanitarian access so that assistance to the Yemeni people can be delivered unimpeded, safely and securely, paving the way for better humanitarian outcomes in the country.

There is no alternative to a political solution if Yemen is to have lasting peace and put an end to the humanitarian crisis once and for all. The Yemeni parties should return to the political track as soon as possible. Special Envoy Martin Griffiths has recently continued to engage with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, pushing for the resumption of intra-Yemeni peace talks and the implementation of confidence-building measures.

It behoves the international community to support the United Nations and the Special Envoy in stepping up their good offices to establish a sustainable mechanism for dialogue and negotiation. China supports the preservation of Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. China also supports the Yemeni parties in arriving at that inclusive solution as soon as possible through dialogue and negotiations based on relevant Security Council resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, and the outcome document of Yemen's National Dialogue Conference.

Alongside the international community, China stands ready to support the Special Envoy's efforts and will continue to play a constructive role towards a political solution to the Yemeni issue.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): We thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for requesting this meeting, and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his briefing. We also express our appreciation to the United Nations and its humanitarian partners for their selfless service in Yemen under extremely difficult circumstances.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen remains a source of great concern. Millions are on the brink of famine. In addition, the conflict in Al-Hudaydah governorate has escalated further as renewed fighting has moved closer to Al-Hudaydah city. With the situation deteriorating dramatically, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warns that the recent escalation of fighting has left the lives of hundreds of thousands in an extremely dangerous situation.

We heard it loud and clear earlier from Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock that Yemen is facing the worst humanitarian crisis. Almost every day, millions struggle to survive and depend on humanitarian assistance to obtain basic needs and services. The devaluation of the Yemeni rial, rising food prices, non-payment of public salaries and a cholera outbreak have contributed to further worsening the humanitarian situation in the country. As has been repeatedly stated by the United Nations and its humanitarian partners, Al-Hudaydah port is a lifeline for millions who depend on humanitarian assistance.

In that regard, we appeal to all parties to do everything possible so that the United Nations and its humanitarian partners can have safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to reach all Yemenis in need. We also stress the importance of protecting civilians and civilian facilities. In addition, for the sake and consideration of civilians who have suffered so much, we call on the parties to exercise restraint to avoid civilian casualties. The launching of missiles by the Houthis against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and attacks on commercial vessels are also counterproductive and unacceptable. We condemn such acts.

It is indeed heartbreaking to note that despite the continued efforts of the Special Envoy to revive the political talks, the fighting in Yemen is escalating, affecting civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. While urging all parties to cooperate with

the United Nations and its humanitarian partners, we underscore that the ultimate solution to end the unspeakable tragedy in Yemen is a comprehensive political dialogue that meets the legitimate aspirations of Yemenis and addresses the security concerns of regional actors. In that regard, we support the tireless diplomatic efforts of the Special Envoy, who has continued his shuttle diplomacy to bring all parties back to the negotiating table.

In conclusion, it is imperative for all parties to engage with the Special Envoy in good faith and constructively, without any preconditions. That is what the people of Yemen expect from all parties. We also believe that the Security Council and countries with influence should extend their backing to the endeavours of the Special Envoy as he continues to facilitate a political solution in accordance with relevant Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015). Lasting peace in Yemen will be possible only through an inclusive political process facilitated by the United Nations.

The President: I will now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of the United States.

I thank Mr. Lowcock for his briefing. What we know about the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is horrifying, but truthfully what is even scarier is what we do not know. Recently, journalists visited a remote village in northern Yemen. They found families wasting away, surviving — if you can call it that — on a diet of sour green paste made of leaves from a local plant. One mother of a seven-month-old was so malnourished that she often could not feed her baby, and she had no other means. She told the journalists, "Since the day she was born, I have not had the money to buy her milk or buy her medicine". The pictures of the village's starving babies captured by the journalists are almost too much to take. These kids were wasting away off the grid. Their parents cannot even afford the cost of transporting their kids to clinics for help.

Families in Yemen rely on outside aid to survive. Yet the needs are so vast and the obstacles so tough that it is hard to figure out who needs help and actually get it there. That is despite the best efforts of so many brave aid workers, who struggle to deal with officials on the ground blocking access and interfering with relief efforts. In the end, we may never know how many kids are dying in these remote villages. Parents rarely report their deaths and they never get counted in the already dire statistics of the United Nations.

Stories like those are overwhelming, but the Security Council is not helpless in the face of this crisis. There are things that the international community can do to help these starving children and their mothers. We just have to have the will to do them. The last time the Council met on Yemen (see S/PV.8348), we all urged the parties to de-escalate and go back to talks. But as we heard today, the opposite has happened. So the United States calls on all parties to take precautions to protect the grain mills and food storage facilities around Al-Hudaydah. Yemen cannot afford any more close calls with fighting around these warehouses. Fighters must not enter United Nations facilities, which must be protected from attack.

This is not rocket science. The minimum that the Security Council can demand of the fighters from all sides is to allow humanitarian relief to reach the starving people of Yemen. Recent fighting is making the main road from the port much harder to use and the parties should work with the United Nations to get aid moving around without interference. Finally, the parties must avoid moving ahead with any new restrictions on imports of foods, fuel and other lifesaving goods bound for Yemen. Those are things that the parties can do immediately.

In the longer term, everyone around the table today knows what must be done. All of us support the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to find ways to reduce the violence and return to talks. The tragedy that is building in Yemen is almost beyond comprehension, but we are not helpless in the face of it. Everyone — the Security Council, the warring parties in Yemen and their partners — should be focused on negotiating an end to this war, not making the suffering of Yemeni children worse.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Bin Mubarak (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for giving us the opportunity to speak before the Council for the second time this month. We wish you and the delegation of the United States every success. We would also like to thank Mr. Mark Lowcock and his team, along with all the humanitarian workers, for their

sincere and great efforts to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in my country.

Today, the Security Council is discussing the humanitarian situation in my country. While we greatly appreciate this international attention, the deteriorating humanitarian situation is neither incidental nor the result of a natural disaster. Its causes are clear, and those responsible for them are known to everyone. Dealing only with the results and the symptoms of the conflict without addressing its root causes is a dangerous way to address conflicts. It is bound to fail.

Four years ago, on 21 September 2014, the Houthi militias, backed by Iran, the world's State sponsor of terrorism, launched a coup against the State and the outcome of the national dialogue and against everything that the Yemenis had agreed to. His Excellency the President of the Republic, Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, said at the time that what Yemen was being subjected to was "a conspiracy that is dragging the country to civil war". He affirmed that he would spare no effort in discharging his constitutional responsibilities and would work to restore State authority.

Since that day, the Yemeni Government, under his leadership, has made every effort to put an end to the coup and regain State authority. It has made one concession after the other and extended its hand for peace based on the terms of reference, in support of the efforts of the United Nations and its Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths. The Yemeni Government has made it its goal to achieve the dream of its people to build a civil and modern federal State that supports democracy, human rights and freedom based on the rule of law and good governance. That is the only path that we wish to take.

Throughout the latest developments, the Council has agreed on a track to support peace, led by the United Nations and based on the three terms of reference that have been agreed that the local, regional and international levels, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Council resolutions, especially resolution 2216 (2015). That is the only way to advance the peace process.

In every round of peace talks, the most recent of which took place in Geneva, we have hoped to reach a positive outcome on the humanitarian track, at least in terms of alleviating the suffering of our people in all the matters on the agenda. However, the coup forces intentionally absented themselves at the last minute, which indicated their lack of will to discuss any humanitarian measures, because that would cost them a card that they have always played internally and externally. The international community must be aware of that.

Speaking of the humanitarian situation, all of the cities that have been under the control of the coup forces since 2014 have witnessed systemic raids, the terrorization and humiliation of civilians, and the recruitment and deployment of innocent children to the battlefields of death, as well as the spread of black markets and the theft of our people's wealth in broad daylight. That is a dangerous development of which we have warned repeatedly.

The suffering of thousands of families in Al-Hudaydah and all areas under the control of the coup forces is due mainly to the imprisonment of family breadwinners; the loss of income through confiscation by the Houthis of over 70 per cent of the State's resources, according to United Nations reports; and the absence of humanitarian aid because it is being obstructed, stolen or diverted by the Houthi militias, as has been testified to by United Nations agencies. That issue is at the core of the conversation on confidence-building measures in Yemen that have been sponsored by the Council, with the support of the Special Envoy and the States that are sponsoring the political process in Yemen.

Al-Hudaydah governorate is now the main challenge to humanitarian aid because the Houthi militias are the only ones benefiting from the seaport, while the residents of the area are starving to death. That cannot persist much longer. The humanitarian suffering in Al-Hudaydah must end. We must not allow navigation in the Red Sea to be threatened. We must take action, while giving due protection and care to the civilians.

I do not exaggerate when I say that the humanitarian aid being given to Al-Hudaydah by the coalition States, foremost among which are the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates is unprecedented in any similar military operation in Yemen and the region. In that regard, I would like to specifically mention that such aid is being provided by the States of the coalition, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

My country and the coalition States have sent a letter to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian

Affairs explaining their concern over the safety of civilians and aid workers because the road between Sana'a and Al-Hudaydah lies close to fighting in areas where the Houthi militias have transformed the city of Al-Hudaydah into a military centre. They have set up numerous checkpoints that are hindering the movement and passage of civilians. They have also used the Red Sea mills, silos and warehouses for military purposes, as Mr. Lowcock mentioned earlier.

We have affirmed that the Yemeni Government and the coalition members understand that those roads are used by commercial and humanitarian trucks, and we are therefore actively working to secure them by removing the mines planted by the Houthi militias, which threaten civilians, aid workers and health-care providers. That is merely one of the precautionary measures that we are taking. The Evacuation and Humanitarian Operation Cell has made it clear to all stakeholders that there are many other alternative routes that connect Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a. The coalition of States sent a detailed letter today to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs concerning those roads and routes.

The Yemeni Government confirms its commitment to international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law, and calls for equal condemnation of all those who violate those laws. We also call for the intensification of efforts and coordination with the relevant official bodies, and for the establisment of major hubs for the United Nations agencies working in the humanitarian field in the temporary capital of Aden and other major Yemeni cities. The Yemeni Government and the Arab coalition have previously called for decentralized humanitarian work so as to avoid any complications arising from military operations. There are currently five humanitarian aid areas in Yemen, each of which has land and sea corridors to guarantee that aid reaches all the people of Yemen equally.

With regard to the depreciation of the Yemeni rial, the Government of Yemen has established a high-level economic committee that has adopted several measures to stop the currency deterioration, including creating favourable conditions for exporting oil and gas, and preventing the flight of hard currency, as well as stopping the import of luxury goods and increasing interest rates. In that regard, I would like to say to the United Nations, States and donor institutions that play a pivotal role in stabilizing the Yemeni currency if they were to channel their aid to Yemen through the Yemeni Central Bank, as is being done by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Today, 21 September, holds a bitter memory for our people, who call it the day of the catastrophe. However, what fills us with hope is that in a few days we will celebrate the anniversary of the 26 September revolution, when our people got rid of the racist rule of the imams that the rebellious militias are trying to revive in Yemen. Those are the laws of nature. The night ends and the sun always rises. Will our sun rise soon?

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.